LeysNews

YOUR FREE INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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www.leysnews.co.uk @leysnewseditor 01865 711756 editor@leysnews.co.uk

Festive family fun at The Barn

BY RICHARD CHIDWICK

CHRISTMAS got off to a fantastic start at The Barn in Blackbird Leys with a special family event.

There were lots of activities including biscuit decorating, a tombola, bouncy castle and even a visit from Father Christmas. The event was run by the Dovecote Project, Leys CDI and Leys Housing Consortium.

Ines Kretzschmar who coordinated the event for Catalyst Housing said: "It was enjoyable to see the community getting out and enjoying the festive atmosphere and the Christmas spirit."

Special guest at the event was Father Christmas who arrived to a sizeable crowd of children. In an exclusive interview with Leys News, he said: "Christmas gives young people something to believe in, we need to keep the tradition going, and it teaches children values that might disappear."

Local Charity Nature Nuture who have been awarded a contract to work in the Leys for 2018 and encourage children to get involved in outdoor activities, had a stall at the event. Kirsty Marries who was representing the charity said: "Nature Nurture is an award winning charity that encourages people to go outside in the community and find out about nature on their doorstep. Today we are doing clay moulding and making patterns with leaves to encourage children to embrace the outdoors."

Ellie from Catalyst Housing said: "It is fabulous to see so many families come out to participate in collective activities to celebrate the winter and Christmas season."

Simon Ferguson added: "I go to the Clock House a lot and events like this can really help encourage young and older people to understand each other better."

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Non-position holders: John Dillon, Daniel Jones, Peter Nowland and Pat Stannard.
For contact and further details see page 5.

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

BLACKBIRD LEYS WARD

Linda Smith (*Labour*)
125 Oxford Road, Old Marston,
Oxford OX3 0RB
T: 07961 121704
E: cllrlsmith@oxford.gov.uk

Rae Humberstone (*Labour*)
75 Little Bury, Greater Leys,
Oxford OX4 7UZ
T: 01865 779678
and 07768 429566

NORTHFIELD BROOK WARD

Sian Taylor (*Labour*)
5 Regent Street,
Oxford OX4 1QU
T: 07767 311425
E: cllrstaylor@oxford.gov.uk

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LEYS DIVISION

Deborah McIlveen (*Labour*)
17 Three Corners Road,
Oxford OX4 7UF
T: 01865 727824
and 07941 785538
E: deborah.mcilveen@oxfordshire.gov.uk

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Anneliese Dodds (*Labour*)
Unit A, Bishops Mews,
Transport Way, Oxford OX4 6HD
E: anneliesedoddsmp@gmail.com

OBITUARY: Councillor Jennifer Pegg

COUNCILLOR Jennifer Pegg who has died aged 65, was a passionate, determined, and hardworking councillor. She will be greatly missed by her friends, fellow City Councillors, City Council officers, and members of the community.

She was first elected to the City Council on 22 October 2015, representing the Northfield Brook ward. She served on the West Area Planning Committee, the Scrutiny Committee, and the Scrutiny Housing Panel.

She was involved in the City of Oxford Charity, a group of ancient charities for the benefit of the people of Oxford in need, and she was a volunteer and trustee of Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre.

Councillor Pegg was a retired publisher and a school governor. She had graduated with BA French, BA Political Science, and MSc International Relations. Her hobbies included gardening, travelling and films.

Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council said: "We are all deeply shocked by the news of Jennifer's untimely death. She was a wonderful colleague - loyal, funny, determined, and very hard working on behalf of the community that she represented in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys.

"She had enjoyed a very successful career in publishing, and then threw herself heart and soul into local politics. She was a fierce campaigner on women's issues and on the serious problems of poverty across the city.

"We will miss her very deeply; she was a lovely person."

Councillor Sian Taylor, who represented Northfield Brook ward with Councillor Pegg, said: "Jennifer chose to do what she did, both as a councillor and in her voluntary work, because she cared deeply about the people of Oxford – she was their champion and she their voice.

"We have been councillors together for a number of years. We were colleagues and friends, and we worked together very much as a team to offer support to our constituents.

"I felt a huge affection for her, and I feel shocked and saddened that we have lost someone so dedicated and hardworking. There will be a huge gap in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys without her."

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive of Oxford City Council said: "During the time I spent with Jennifer, I got a clear sense of her wanting to do the best for residents, and I know lots of staff appreciated the way she worked with officers to get things done for the community. She will be deeply missed."

Public asked to help plan GP services in Oxfordshire

LOCAL GP practices have been working with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and patient representatives on plans for the future of GP and primary care services in Oxfordshire.

Throughout the summer GP practices have joined others in Oxfordshire to talk about how they currently work, what problems they regularly face and how they could work better. GPs have also been talking to Patient Participation Groups to find out more about the patient experience, listening to what patients feel is important and their ideas for change.

From this ongoing engagement work with patients, GPs and clinicians have identified the challenges each locality faces, their priorities and how those priorities could be met.

Julie Dandridge, Head of Primary Care, Oxfordshire CCG, said 'We would like to invite local residents to come and join us at some workshops to discuss in detail with doctors and NHS managers how GP and primary care services in their local area could be organised. We want to know from people, what works well at their GP practice at the moment. GP services are facing increased demand, recruitment difficulties and budget pressures, so we would like to understand from the public, how services could work better in the future'.

■ **Further details of the events planned in Oxfordshire can be found at www.consult.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/consult.ti/LocalityPlansOxon To book your place and get more info please email cscsu.talkinghealth@nhs.net or call 01865 334638**

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If you would like to volunteer as part of our team and help to produce your local, independent newspaper please email the editor (details right) for more information and an informal chat about how you can help.

Board of Directors: Sasha East (chair), Teresa Fieldwick, Ines Kretzschmar, David Potter
Editor: Sarah Edwards, editor@leysnews.co.uk
Office Manager: John Charlton, advertising@leysnews.co.uk
Design: Julian Dourado, design@leysnews.co.uk
Treasurer: Janet Pavelin
Reporters: Richard Chidwick, Jane Yates

Contact:
Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX
(*Vehicle access via Jack Argent Close*)
01865 711756
www.leysnews.co.uk

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Korky Paul celebrates books at Windale

AWARD winning children's book illustrator, Korky Paul opened the new library at Windale Community Primary School in Blackbird Leys.

The school has been fundraising through non-uniform days, cake sales and fayres in order to buy new books and equipment for the completely refurbished special reading space. The staff team led by English Lead Lindsay Watson and joined by parent volunteers from The Dragon School in Oxford, have worked tirelessly to create a calm and inviting space for the children to encourage more reading. Many books have been kindly donated by The Hamilton Trust and The Dragon School.

Korky Paul led a whole-school assembly, during which he drew a special edition picture of his famous illustrative creation 'Winnie the Witch', which he has gifted to Windale Primary, and also narrated the magical tale. The children were talked through the unique process of creating illustrations and how they add to a story.

The whole school was invited to the new library to witness the official opening as Korky, surrounded by the school's junior librarians, cut the ribbon and announced the library open to the sound of a huge cheer from staff and children.

Headteacher, Ms Katie Geran-Haq, said: "The children are excited to have an on-site library to access a whole range of reading material, including non-fiction, picture books, novels and comics. We also have an online Reading Cloud with e-books where children can review what they have read and blog about their reading. Our library venture is encouraging reading at all levels across the school."

The library also aims to have a section suitable for parents up and running in the New Year to further encourage a reading culture with eveyone associated with the school.

The library is open until 4pm every day and will be run by newly appointed Librarian Sharon Smith.

Residents in the Leys celebrate 20 years of Fry's Hill with The Big Lunch

THE Leys celebrated community, with a Big Lunch at The Barn in Greater Leys in September. The Big Lunch is the UK's annual get-together for neighbours.

An incredible 9.3 million people joined the Big Lunch this year, that's 14% of people in the UK. The Big Lunch sees people throughout the country set up bring-and-share lunches and forge stronger bonds with their friends and neighbours.

This year, thanks to Good Food Oxford and funding from Oxford City Council, the annual event returned to The Leys with 47 people taking part. People came along with food to share, or just turned up and joined in.

Oxford City Council's Mixing Pot was in attendance – a way for people to share favourite recipes and cooking tips. For those wanting to be more active, there was apple pressing, a smoothie bike and even a bouncy castle!

Everyone who came along met someone new, and everyone felt the Big Lunch had improved the neighbourhood and helped them feel more connected to the community.

Hannah Fenton, Manager of Good Food Oxford said: "The Big Lunch was a wonderful way to get over our usual shyness and reserve and get to know our neighbours over some shared food. The event was a great chance for everyone in The Leys to get together.

Plus there were plenty of fun activities for children."

This year, the Big Lunch celebrated 20 years of Fry's Hill, the second phase of the Greater Leys development, now managed by Catalyst Housing Ltd and Greensquare Group.

Neighbours Mr and Mrs Cole, and Mrs Clarke, were some of the first residents to move into the new development, and are celebrating 20 years of living in the area. Mr Cole said: "We get on really well, it's really important to get to know your neighbours. I recommend it."

Music to celebrate outstanding charity services

IT WILL be a red-letter day this Friday (December 15) for local charity, Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse, when a Champions Choir from Oxfordshire and across the Thames Valley will sing in a concert at the Dorchester Abbey, to celebrate the work of Reducing the Risk and its partners.

The concert will begin at 7pm and there will be lots of audience participation, carols, secular music, and the Oxfordshire County Clarinet Quintet will be playing lively music, including a Christmas Jazz Suite.

The charity works to improve the life chances of many Oxfordshire children who come from homes where there is abuse. It also supports Oxfordshire's most vulnerable adults, keeping them safe and helping them to rebuild their lives. Reducing the Risk's Independent Domestic Violence service (IDVA) team of four work with victims at high risk and their children. Since it was established in 2008, the IDVA has worked with over 2,200 high risk victims of abuse, and supported over 3,300 children at high risk.

■ DATE: Friday 15 December, 2017 at Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7HH

■ Tickets at £12.50 for adults and £5 for children and include interval wine, soft drinks and mince pies. Tickets available from: www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/206406 (all proceeds go to Reducing the Risk)

Talking about homelessness

OXFORD City Council hosted a city-wide 'Conversation' with a wide range of people who have an interest in helping to find solutions to the increase in rough sleeping in the city.

Levels of street homelessness are rising across the country and are nearing crisis point, with the number of people rough sleeping in England more than doubling between 2010 and 2016.

There are many factors why people can find themselves sleeping rough. Loss of accommodation and lack of affordable housing and poverty, but also people who are made vulnerable to being homeless through a range of individual circumstances and experiences which can include loss of income, family breakdown and mental health problems.

Street homelessness is a complex problem and the solutions must therefore also address wider social issues including drug and alcohol misuse along with complex mental health issues. That is why the City Council is bringing together a wide range of partners to work together and towards a common understanding of the causes and to a means to tackle street homelessness.

The City Conversation was held in The Assembly Room at Oxford Town Hall at the end of November.

Participants invited included people with lived experience of rough sleeping and homelessness; homelessness organisations and service providers, including health and mental health providers as well as other charities and voluntary groups; businesses and the universities; faith groups; public bodies, and local councillors and MPs.

Following the conversation a vision was agreed that will ensure that nobody has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford in the future.

Some of the possible objectives that will be worked on include maximising community buy-in, working together and learning from work that has been done in Manchester. It was already agreed that all work should happen in the open and businesses, the universities and individual colleges should all be included.

A city council spokesperson said: "While rough sleeping remains, we believe that this action could provide some guiding principles for anyone who is concerned about the problem and wants to help address this. But more time is needed to consider these, add to or amend them and get the views of other people on what the common ground for the partnership should be.

"At the City Conversation it was proposed that:

- People are safer off the streets – Rough sleeping is harmful to individuals and society. Efforts should be focussed on helping individuals to access support and accommodation away from the streets.
- Rough sleepers need shelter and support – Responses need to involve housing and appropriate support.
- Everyone can help – Everyone including individuals and organisations can do something to help.
- We are better together – All parties, including those not currently involved, should work together in a co-ordinated way to deliver the vision.
- Lived experience matters – Homeless people and those who have experienced homelessness need to be part of and help form the solution.
- Small change should deliver big change – Giving money directly to individuals is unhelpful and potentially dangerous. It's better to donate to the many homelessness organisations working in the field and we should make this easier to do."

The city conversation should continue towards agreeing a Rough Sleeping Charter for Oxford by April 2018 that provides guiding principles for all concerned to help address the problem.

It will be overseen by a small, time-limited steering group of people from the groups represented at the City Conversation, including at least one person with lived experience.

Reducing fuel poverty in Oxford

BETTER Housing Better Health (BHBH) is a service working to reduce and prevent the number of people in fuel poverty, and help improve health and well-being. It is coordinated by the National Energy Foundation working with health and social care organisations, helping to maximise support available to residents.

BHBH has a range of support services for residents including a free helpline with trained energy experts offering bespoke advice on reducing energy bills, improving the energy performance of homes and financial help available. They can also provide access to the latest grants and financial assistance for energy efficiency measures, help with fuel debt alleviation and direct people to support organisations such as the falls service, fire and rescue and befriending services.

BHBH can also offer visits from advisors who can fit free energy saving measures in the home, such as draught-proofing and low energy LED lightbulbs, potentially saving around £30 a year on energy bills. They can check if people are on the cheapest energy tariff and help change to a cheaper one. They can also refer to a service to ensure residents are receiving the correct benefits and can help deal with any debt problems.

■ For further info call the free helpline 0800 107 0044 www.bhbh.org.uk

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Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Thanks to the Blackbird Leys Parish Council for sponsoring this page

For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk

Oxford Christmas Market dates announced

Until 17 December

Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3AS

THE city of dreaming spires will again be filled with festive joy as the Oxford Christmas Market returns to the heart of the city on Broad Street. With the sound of choirs singing Christmas carols, market traders offering unusual and handmade gifts, colourful decorations brightening wooden stalls and the aroma of mulled wine and cinnamon the Oxford Christmas Market is returns for a magical Christmas experience. www.oxfordchristmasmarket.co.uk

Greater flexibility prompts mums to set up their own businesses

IF YOU are a mother thinking of making a career change in 2018 then you are not alone. Almost two thirds of mums are interested in retraining and 58% have considered setting up their own business, according to Workingmums.co.uk's annual survey.

The transition to parenthood brings huge upheaval and the survey of over 2,300 mums shows how many are considering leaving their jobs or sector as a result of becoming parents.

FLEXIBILITY

The biggest reason by far given for considering starting a business or franchise is the need for greater flexibility – 36% said this. Others reasons given were wanting to be their own boss (15%) and that they had always wanted to set up their own business (17%). While 68% of women were just thinking about starting a business, 15% were already in the early stages of setting up and 10% were working on a business plan.

Access to funding was seen as the biggest challenge.

The survey also found 64% of women were interested in retraining. Twenty per cent had retrained in the last 12 months. 71% said they would be more likely to retrain if courses were more flexible.

The survey shows that in addition to losing women to self employment or other sectors, many are still failing to make the most of those who have taken a career break, despite the growing number of returner programmes.

BACK TO WORK

For those who had dropped out of the workplace to look after their children, the survey shows many were finding it difficult to get back to work, particularly in their original sector.

Only 14% had found a job in their field quite easily. 32% could not find a suitable job in their field; 24% had found a job in their field but it was not flexible enough; 24% had found a job in their field, but at a lower level; and 15% had found a job, but not in their field.

Gillian Nissim, founder of Workingmums.co.uk, said: "These figures show that women are having to be very creative after they have children in order to keep working and have the flexibility and get the challenge they need.

"Having children can force a huge rethink in priorities which can lead to considerations around career change, but too often the reason women make these changes is because the culture at their previous workplace does not take into account the challenges they face. It is not that these women do not want to work and most have years of experience and skills.

"The ironic thing is that in being creative and adaptable they are developing the very skills that employers so need to confront the turbulent and dynamic world of work today."

BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council Board of Ideas

At the Leys Fair this year the parish council asked residents to give their ideas and thoughts about living on the Leys estate.

Many people, young and old and from all backgrounds, participated in this activity by writing their views on a large display board. There was a general positive view about living on the estate but also some issues that concerned residents.

The council is now looking at all the suggestions to see how it can address some of the issues raised. Further information will be announced at forthcoming Parish Council meetings.

Fly tipping and waste

The council is keen to ensure the estate is clean, tidy and pleasant place to live. It is encouraging residents to report to the authorities any fly tipping that they see in and around the local area.

■ To report any fly tipping please call 01865 249811 or email the City Council at saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk

Call for new Parish Councillors

Blackbird Leys Parish Council is looking for new councillors to join the organisation. Parish Councillors are not employees, they are elected representatives who volunteer their time for free to work on behalf of their local parish.

You can become a Parish Councillor either by election or by co-option. Elections take place every four years, or as a by-election between scheduled elections.

Co-option is when existing Parish Councillors appoint a new member without an election. Blackbird Leys Parish Council can have a maximum of fourteen Councillors, seven in Northfield Brook and seven in Blackbird Leys Parish Wards. The Council currently has a number of vacancies they wish to fill.

Councillors meet regularly as a parish council and welcome attendance and participation from the communities they serve.

Meetings are advertised through the Blackbird Leys Website and Leys News but you can contact the parish council Clerk for dates and times of the forthcoming meetings on bblparishcouncil@gmail.com. Normally at the beginning of each meeting there is an open forum for the public to put forward questions and points they wish to raise.

■ For a nomination form please contact the Parish Clerk on 07754 271831 or bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

Blackbird Leys
Parish Council

Next Meeting Date:

- **Tuesday 30 January, 7pm**

Meeting held in Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre.

Parish Councillors
Gordon Roper (*Chair*), Ann Booker (*Vice Chair*), John Dillon, Daniel Jones, Peter Nowland and Pat Stannard.

Phone (9am–5pm) **07754 271831**

Email **bblparishcouncil@gmail.com**

For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website **www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

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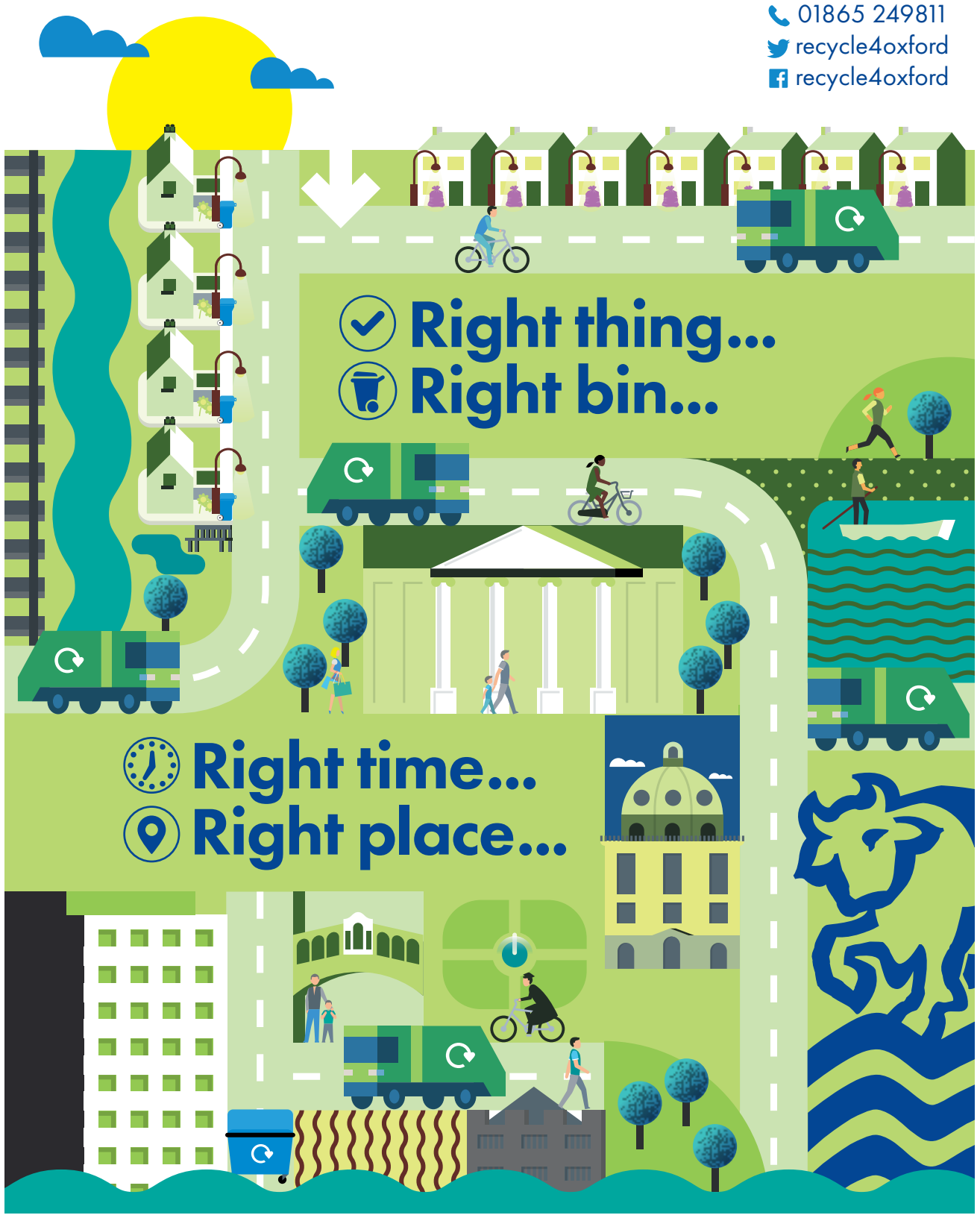

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New Year New You?

ARE you over 50 and looking to keep fit? Then why not sign up at The Oxford Academy and use the free gym sessions? Just book an induction and prove your age, and you're ready to go!

■ To book send an email to: ox4communityservices@theoxfordacademy.org.uk

RECYCLING

Dreaming of a green Christmas

CHRISTMAS is here once again. It's time to deck your halls, put up your tree and wrap your gifts. Of course, recycling over Christmas is as important as ever because households generate 30% more waste at this time of year, and 80% of this can be recycled. Below, are a few reminders to make your Christmas recycling even easier.

Bin day changes
Your normal bin collection day will be one day later this year during Christmas week (starting 25 December) only. That means, if your bin collection day is normally Tuesday 26 December, it will move to Wednesday 27 December. Things go back to normal from New Year's Day.

Garden waste suspension
Garden waste (brown bin) collections will be suspended for the Christmas and New Year period between Tuesday 26 December and Friday 5 January. Collections will resume as normal from Tuesday 9 January 2018.

Blue bin recycling
If you have any extra recycling, you can leave it out next to your bin in a clear bag or cardboard box and the council will collect it! All Christmas wrapping paper and cards are welcome (minus the glitter and tape please!). Wine bottles, beer cans, foil and Christmas pudding boxes too. Remember it's all important, no matter how small. Even good old plastic bottles – recycling these can help make a new festive jumper!

If you're lucky enough to get new clothes this year and want to recycle your old ones, please take them to a local charity shop or collection point (we can't recycle them in the blue bin).

Food Recycling
Simply pop your soggy veg, gone off meat and that lucky wish bone into your food caddy! It will get turned into electricity and fertiliser for local farmland. And, what's more, you can now line your caddy with plastic liners (though no black bags or canvas bags please!).

A simple carrier bag or bread bag would do the job. This means that it is much easier, cleaner and cheaper for you to recycle your food. You can still use compostable liners and newspaper, if you prefer.

Small electrical items and batteries
Have your fairy lights lost their sparkle, or is it time for new batteries? Recycle your old ones by leaving on top of your blue, brown or green bin in a clear bag or carrier bag on your bin day.

Christmas tree recycling
Recycle your naked (pots and decorations removed) Christmas tree at home or on the go. You can put them out for collection on your blue bin day between 9 January and 2 February.

If you live in a flat, or want to recycle your real tree more quickly, you can take it to one of 12 collection points located all over the city, which will be open from 27 December (through to 14 January).

For a list of locations, see www.oxford.gov.uk/christmasrecycling, email recycling@oxford.gov.uk, or give us a call on 01865 249811.

LOOK GOOD FOR LESS:
Party looks on a budget!

BY JASMINE BEANEY

FINDING party outfits this time of year can be difficult. We have presents to buy, cold and miserable weather to tackle and it is the season of giving to others.

However, this shouldn't stop you from treating yourself a little this winter! It is easier than it may seem to look good for less, and get a great party look on a budget. You cannot go wrong with a pair of black denim jeans to begin with – the colour black is great as it will go with any colour item of clothing, shoes and accessories.

You may also stay a little warmer travelling to and from the party in this chilly season wearing jeans. To style with the jeans, sequin glitter tops are a must for creating a winter party outfit! This will add some glitz and glam to your outfit creating a statement look, with colours such as gold and silver that give a Christmas feel and a mesmerizing glow. For an additional layer to keep warm, use a simple black jacket to wear over your top.

This will go well with the black jeans and create an even, colour coordinated outfit and will not take the focus away from the sequin glitter top.. For shoes to (nearly) complete the outfit, I recommend a nude pointed heel. This will enhance a classy, sophisticated feel to the look, again not taking too much of the focus away from the sequin glitter top.

The colour nude will also balance the colours in the outfit as there will not be too much black, and the pointed toe will add some sass to the outfit. To fully complete your party look, you will need a clutch purse to put your essentials in. I suggest one that is the same or similar colour to the top; this will add a little more essence of sparkle to the outfit as well as balancing the colour. Don't hesitate to indulge in a little more glam with some jewellery such as some bracelets and diamond earrings.

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Inspiring ideas for a glitzy Christmas

We have put together a few ideas from the high street to help you pull together a party look that is sure to turn heads this Christmas, but don't forget that supermarkets and charity shops are always top of our list for great bargains and affordable fashion. Updating last year's outfit can be quick, easy and cheap-just get creative and start trawling your local charity shops for ideas and you can create a unique look at a fraction of high street prices.

1. **Pink sequin top £16 from George at Asda**
2. **Black sequinned kimono jacket £29.99 from New Look**
3. **Bag £10 from Primark**
4. **Black jacket from Sainsbury's**
5. **Rose gold court shoes £16 from George at Asda**
6. **Silver sandals £16 from F+F at Tesco**
7. **Earrings £5 from Primark**
8. **Vinyl skinny jeans £13 from Primark**

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Leys News to all our readers!

Putting on the glitz!

BY NOW our homes should all be looking very festive as we hurtle towards the big day but, if your decorations are looking a little lack lustre and you need a bit of Christmas inspiration then look no further.

We have come up with some last minute ideas to inject some much needed glitz and glamour and have searched the shops for the best Christmas decorations to add to your collection this year.

Whether you are looking for Scandi chic, contemporary or traditional decorations, take you pick from our top ten.

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1. Red Tree Topper, £6.50 Sainsbury's
2. Hanging Antlers, £3 from Sainsbury's
3. Hot air balloon bauble, £3.99 from TK Maxx
4. Reindeer dome light, £3 from Primark
5. Christmas tree light LED, £9.99 from TK Maxx
6. Christmas tree, £5 from Primark
7. JOY LED decoration, £15 from Wilko
8. Nordic country vintage baubles, £10 from Wilko
9. Six pack of decorations, £3 from Primark
10. Wreath, £9.99 from Argos

Pom Pom Puddings for your tree.

Jane's Crafty Christmas Corner

Our resident craft expert JANE YATES has been busy coming up with some great ideas for festive craft projects. Here are her two favourite ideas to decorate your tree or house this Christmas.

Pom Pom Pudding
Pom Poms are definitely back in fashion and this simple, project will make an excellent addition to your tree decorations.

You will need
Wool
A Pom Pom maker
Red buttons
Green felt.
Red ribbon

How to do it
Open up the Pom Pom maker and wrap the white wool around the middle of one side until it is half full, then fill the rest of the Pom Pom maker with brown wool. Cut around and tie ribbon firmly. Thread a button onto the ribbon and then glue on leave shapes cut from the felt.

Glitz and Glamour Garlands
Add some glamour and twinkle to your home this Christmas by using up leftover beads, bits of old jewellery and game pieces from monopoly or other previously-loved trinkets to create these gorgeous garlands.

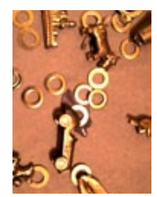
You will need
A selection of beads in different colours and sizes
Other trinkets, game pieces or old jewellery
Epoxy resin glue
Thin wire
Scissors or pliers
A pack of washers.

How to do it
Wearing gloves mix the glue. Glue one washer to a monopoly game piece and then leave to dry. Cut a length of wire.

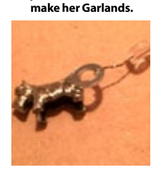
Fold in half as you need to use a double thickness of wire for the Christmas ornaments, then attach the monopoly piece halfway along the folded wire.

Add the beads in any arrangement that you like, and when you feel you have enough beads wind the top of the wire around a pencil to get a hoop shape and cut the surplus off.

Hang on your tree and admire your hard work or give as a unique gift to a friend.



Above and below: Some of the bits and pieces Jane used to make her Garlands.



Glitz and Glamour Garlands for your home.

WIN! Great family games up for grabs in our festive giveaway!

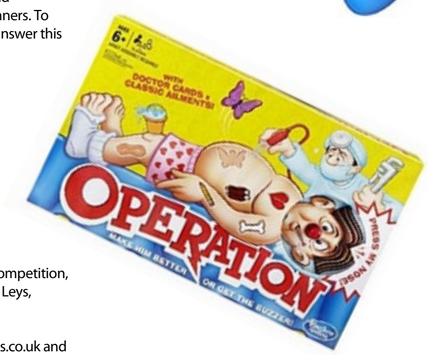
"WELL here it is Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun!" as the festive favourite from 70's rockers Slade has been reminding us since November!

And if you are planning plenty of festive family fun this year then you must enter our fantastic competition.

Christmas is the perfect time to spend with our family and friends and indulge in some traditional entertainment. Our lives are dominated by the digital world, so if you are planning a bit of a screen detox this festive season, our fantastic Christmas competition is just what you need to get started!

We have teamed up with the brilliant team at online retailer www.flubit.com to bring you the chance to win one of three fantastic family board games that are guaranteed to bring a smile to everyone's face and keep boredom at bay even when the last Quality Street has been eaten!

We have one each of BopIt, Frustration and Operation to give away to three lucky winners. To be in with a chance all you need to do is answer this simple question correctly:



Where do people traditionally kiss at Christmas?

1. In the kitchen
2. Under the mistletoe
3. In the garden shed

Send your correct answer to: Christmas Competition, Leys News, 26, Kingfisher Green, , Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.

Or email your answers to editor@leysnews.co.uk and make sure you put Christmas Comp in the subject line.

Please remember to include your full name, address and day time phone number as well as your email address.

The closing date for entries will be Monday December 18 and the winners MUST be available to come and collect their prizes on Thursday December 21 between 10am and 12 noon at from our offices in Kingfisher Green.

flubit

Thanks to Flubit for generously donating our fantastic prizes. https://flubit.com/

Usual terms and conditions apply. No correspondence will be entered into, no cash alternative is offered and the editor's decision is final.

Children's Christmas Fun

Competition Winners

Colouring Competition
Last issue's winners are Priyanka, age 7, from Cowley (*top*) and Ola, age 9, from Blackbird Leys (*below*). They both will receive a prize.

A CRAFTY CHRISTMAS!

Christmas decorations
Making your own Christmas decorations is fun, easy and cheaper than buying them from the shops. You also end up with an original piece of festive art and a great feeling of satisfaction from making something yourself! These Christmas stocking decorations are fun to make and decorate and pretty to hang on the tree. And, of course, you can hide a small present inside, too!

You will need
Red felt
Needle and thread
Sequins, buttons and other decoration
Fabric glue
Ribbon

Instructions
1. Fold the felt in half and cut two stockings out. Use blanket stitch or a small running stitch to sew the stockings together, leaving the top edge open.
2. Cut a length of ribbon and fold in half to make a loop and sew or glue inside the stocking.
3. Decorate with buttons, glitter, felt shapes, sequins and beads and then hang on the Christmas tree filled with candy canes and other goodies. Or why not make 24 Christmas stockings, add numbers and make your own advent calendar!

A Christmas wishing tree
This Christmas wish tree is a nice little family project that helps us think about the real meaning of Christmas.

Instructions
1. Paint the spoon pink and leave to dry.
Use a different colour bauble for each member of the family.

You will need
A large sheet of green card
coloured paper
Glue

Instructions
1. Cut a Christmas tree from the green card. Cut out the baubles on coloured paper and cut out.
2. On each bauble write a Christmas wish. Glue the baubles on to the tree.

A wooden spoon angel
This pretty wooden spoon angel is an easy Christmas craft. She makes a great puppet and looks pretty on the top of the Christmas tree, too.

You will need
Wooden spoon
Pink paint
White and pink felt
Yellow wool
Wiggle eyes
Gold card
Gold pipe cleaner (chenille stem)
Pink pen
Glue
Sticky tape

Instructions
1. Paint the spoon pink and leave to dry.

2. Make the dress by cutting a quarter circle of white felt. Roll into a cone around the spoon. Glue around the neck and up the back of the cone to secure.
3. Cut two arms from white foam and two hands from pink. Glue one hand to the end of each arm and the other ends of the arms to the body.
4. Glue on some wool as hair. Make a halo by twisting a pipe cleaner into shape and taping it to the back of the head.
5. Cut wings from gold card and glue them to the angel's back. Finally, add two eyes and draw on a face.

CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

Your name

Age

Name of parent or guardian

Phone number

Address

The closing date for entries is 24 December 2017.

Send your entries to Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX

A New Coat for Christmas

OXFORD Playhouse presents A New Coat for Christmas, a brand new show to enchant little ones in the Burton Taylor Studio this festive season. Based on Harriet Ziefert's post-war children's story, A New Coat for Anna, this delightful tale tells of a little girl who needs a new coat to keep her warm in the winter. But times are hard, so she and her mother set about making one – with a little help from their friends. As winter turns to spring they visit the Farmer and his flock of very fluffy sheep and ask for wool. In the summertime a Spinner and Weaver help turn it into cloth. And in the autumn the Tailor makes it into a beautiful red coat with six pretty buttons – just in time for the cosiest Christmas they have had for a very long time.

A New Coat for Christmas is inspired by a true tale of finding friendship in the most surprising circumstances. Written and Directed by Anna Glynn (Flintlock Theatre) the show stars Leonie Spilsbury whose previous appearances at Oxford Playhouse include What To Do When You Find A Dinosaur, Robin Hood and Hurry Up Father Christmas, alongside Laura Soper who is making her professional acting debut.

An Oxford Playhouse production in association with Flintlock Theatre and Reading Rep, this theatrical gem is full of fun, music and dressing up. Don't miss this perfect treat for three to six year olds, all wrapped up and ready to charm children and their grownups.

■ **Tickets for A New Coat for Christmas at the Burton Taylor Studio are £7 for children and £9 for adults and are available from the Oxford Playhouse Ticket Office on 01865 305305 or book online at www.oxfordplayhouse.com**
A New Coat for Christmas will run until Saturday 7 January.

The Lord Mayor of Oxford's Annual Christmas Carol Concert

TICKETS are now on sale for The Lord Mayor's Annual Christmas Carol Concert, which will be taking place next Sunday (17 December) at Oxford Town Hall.

The annual Christmas Carol Concert is a wonderful tradition and has become a highlight of Oxford's festive calendar. People return year upon year to experience the sights of the building's grand Main Hall at Christmas time.

This year the programme will feature the Oxfordshire County Youth Choir, Oxfordshire Young Singers, singers from the City Chambers Choir and more. As usual, many of the audience carols will be accompanied by the fabulous Oxfordshire County Youth Orchestra conducted by John Traill and the famous Father Willis organ.

The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Councillor Jean Fooks, said: "The annual Carol concert in the Town Hall is always a splendid occasion. This year we have the performance interpreted in British Sign Language courtesy of the Handy Voices Singing Choir to make it even more special; do come and sing along with everybody else to raise the Town Hall roof for good causes."

Tickets cost £2.50 each and can be purchased from the Cards for Good Causes shop located in the Long Room, Oxford Town Hall. Opening times are Monday to Saturday 10am until 4pm.

Tickets sales and donations from the concert will be donated to the Lord Mayor's chosen charities: Mayday Trust, Response Giving and Wolvercote Young People's Club. As one of the biggest fundraising events of the civic year we ask that you give what you can this festive season.

■ **The concert starts at 2.30pm and will finish at 4pm. Guests are asked to be seated by 2.15pm.**

A Christmas Carol at the North Wall Theatre

CREATION Theatre's Christmas show this year will be Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol at The North Wall Arts Centre. From the creative team behind last year's sell-out Snow White and Other Tales from the Brothers Grimm and 2014's anarchic The Wind in the Willows, this promises to be a classic show. With misers, music, Marley's ghost and all sorts of Creation twists the theatre will be transformed into Victorian London.

The North Wall will be adapted for cabaret seating with five six-seater tables for each performance so that families can sit together.

■ **3 December to 6 January**
Box office: 01865 766266
www.creationtheatre.co.uk

What's on at The Story Museum this Christmas

Jingle's Magic Sleigh
Until 7 January
Festive songs and storytelling for the whole family. Belle Rochester – Jingle to her friends – has a very special job to do. She's keeper of tales at The Story Museum, collector of wishes and now has a new task. When Jingle first meets Santa Claus, it's Christmas Eve and he's refusing to get out of bed. Feeling unloved and unappreciated, he has just one wish.

Audiences will hear what stories and songs Jingle gives Santa to cheer him and get him back to his Christmas post. Join her for an unforgettable trip through festive stories – from The Wishing Well to the tale of The King of the Goblins who spent Christmas with a poor shoemaker and his family – and see what special gift Santa gives her for her help.

With original music and lots of joining in, Jingle's Magic Sleigh is written and produced by the same great team as Three Bears in 2016. It stars the wonderful singer/storyteller Amantha Edmead making sure this is another Story Museum Christmas show for all the family to enjoy and remember. Tickets start from £5.50.

Curtain up at Christmas
Thursday 21 December
Enjoy a day of creative fun, exploring the exhibitions, watching our Christmas Show, Jingle's Magic Sleigh, before going behind the scenes and joining a storytelling workshop to create your own winter story. By the end of the day you will also have achieved a nationally-recognised Arts Award at Discover level!

Suitable for ages 8–12. This is an unaccompanied day workshop so parents will need to complete a permissions form at the time of booking.

■ **For more info go to www.storymuseum.org.uk**

ADVERTISEMENT

Don't be caught by Christmas cons – advice from Oxford City Council

AS WE APPROACH the Christmas season there is often an increase in the number of cons and scams reported to the Council. They arrive in all shapes and sizes – through your computer, in the mail, or sometimes with a knock on the door. So the message is to be aware and stay cautious. Oxford City Council wants to make sure that the city's residents don't fall victim.

The Council was recently made aware of a scam where a con artist knocked on a resident's door, claimed to be one a council officer and presented an imitation ID card. They demanded the occupant pay a fine for having an untidy garden.

All Oxford City Council staff carry verifiable ID and if you are in any doubt that these are genuine you can ring the council to check. No genuine council caller will mind waiting while you do this.

Another scam involved an email claiming to be from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs offering a refund of Council Tax (HMRC has nothing to do with Council Tax collection). Please remember that Oxford City Council will never contact you directly by phone or email to offer refunds or ask for your bank details.

Cllr Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health said: "Sadly the season of goodwill is also the season of scams. Oxford City Council's highly effective anti-fraud team works in partnership with the police, the National Anti-Fraud Network and other agencies to combat many types of fraud. The team will investigate instances of possible scams that are reported to them.

"Anyone who is uncertain about a phone call or email they receive that claims to be from Oxford City Council, or has someone knock on their door who claims to be council staff, can report it to the team by emailing fraud@oxford.gov.uk or by phoning 01865 252333.

"The police's National Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Centre also offers help and advice on their website, www.actionfraud.police.uk These kinds of scams are typical for this time of year, but don't let your guard down during the rest of the year either as fraudsters can strike at any time."

■ There is also a dedicated National Fraud Week website that offers more info and advice to help raise awareness about the scope and effects of fraud. Visit www.fraudweek.com/fw2016.aspx

Oxford restaurant Thali wins Food Made Good award

THALI'S tiffin tin revolution has helped the Indian street food restaurant triumph in the Reduce Reuse Recycle award at the Food Made Good Awards, the Sustainable Restaurant Association's (SRA) annual, industry leading accolades.

The award was one of 17 presented by SRA President Raymond Blanc and Vice President Prue Leith, at a special ceremony at the Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Hall in London.

Jim Pizer, Founder of Thali said: "We are delighted that the tiffin scheme has won the SRA's Reduce, Reuse, Recycle award. Right from the beginning we modelled our takeaway on Mumbai's reusable tiffin lunchbox system. Today, over 10,000 tiffin owners enjoy takeout with zero waste. Just imagine how much single-use takeaway packaging has been saved!"

Thali, which recently opened its sixth site, in Oxford, has been battling waste since serving its first curry at Glastonbury Festival in 1999.

There are now 10,000 proud tiffin tin owners using the reusable box over and over again, instead of disposable packaging. Customers that don't want to buy the tiffin can take home their food in biodegradable alternatives. Thali fought off stiff competition from Copenhagen's Relae and the UK's largest cafe chain Costa, who were both runners-up in the category.

The Food Made Good Awards reward restaurants and food service businesses whose extraordinary accomplishments in the last year have driven progress in the industry and demonstrated that all food can be made delicious, ethical and sustainable.

To celebrate Thali's Reduce, Reuse, Recycle award the restaurant launched the tiffin scheme at Thali Oxford, 71 George Street, Oxford OX1 2BQ.

Awards will recognise outstanding community contributions

Applications are invited for nominations for High Sheriff's Awards for the year 2017/2018.

THE purpose of these awards is to recognise people in Oxfordshire who have made outstanding contributions to the communities in which they live and work. Nominees will usually have had a high impact on the lives of others over a sustained period of time and will be recognised by other people working in the nominee's area as inspirational and as setting an example for others to follow.

High Sheriff's Awards will not normally be made to people whose work and commitment has already been recognised by the award of a National Honour or by bodies such as the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and Oxfordshire Charity and Voluntary Action.

Nominations can be made by anyone who lives or works in Oxfordshire or who is representing an organisation in the public, voluntary and charitable or private sectors. All nominations will be treated in the strictest confidence and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated as it can be very disappointing to raise expectations which are then not met.

The Nomination Process

All nominations should be made on the form which has been prepared for this purpose and should include the contact details of the nominee as well as the nominator together with a brief summary (400 words maximum) of the reasons why the nominee merits a High Sheriff's Award. A copy of the form is attached.

The deadline for nominations is Thursday 11 January 2018. Successful nominees will be contacted in early February and the awards will be conferred at a ceremony in central Oxford on a date to be confirmed to which nominators, families and friends will also be invited.

Contributions to Community Life

Nominations will be welcome for people who have made outstanding contributions to any aspect of community life but in the current year nominations in the following area will be particularly welcome;

Individuals who are, or have been, involved in crime reduction projects, whether in prevention, rehabilitation or support for the vulnerable.

Individuals who have helped the homeless into work and/or accommodation.

Individuals who have helped turn around the lives of addicts.

■ Nominations should arrive with the High Sheriff BEFORE Thursday 11 January 2018 and sent via email to this email address or by post to High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, c/o Organisation Unlimited, 25 Littleworth Road, Benson OX10 6LY

Oxford Food Bank to host free Christmas Day meal

THE Oxford Food Bank will be organising a Christmas lunch on December 25 at the Kings Centre in Osney Mead. The traditional Christmas meal will be cooked by volunteers with food that would otherwise have been wasted. The Food bank invites anyone and everyone who would like to attend and take part in the principle of sharing a meal.

The organisers hope to make this year's meal even better, with more entertainment and facilities. Individuals and families are welcome and there will be transport for everyone , including wheelchair users , to collect and take people back to their homes.

Oxford Food Bank is a registered charity which aims to reduce food waste in the Oxford area and to reduce food poverty within the local community.

Oxford Food Bank collects good quality fresh food from local supermarkets and wholesalers and delivers it for free to over 80 registered charities in the Oxford area. For every £1 they receive in donations they deliver around £20 worth of fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products. That amounts to well over £1 million worth of food a year.

Food bank donations at The Oxford Academy

THE Oxford Academy is a proud donation collection point for the Community Emergency Food Bank the school is open daily and will gladly receive donations to reception from everyone. Please email rosie.butler@theoxfordacademy.org.uk to find out a list of items which are needed.

AGNES SMITH ADVICE CENTRE

Universal Credit

UNIVERSAL credit is a new benefit for people in or out of work who need help with living costs and rent. You may have heard lots about it and be wondering about how you might be affected.

It is always good to get advice about what you can claim. For many people it will be a change in circumstances which may mean they need to claim Universal Credit. These changes might be a job ending, being found fit for work following a period of illness or relationship breakdown.

In Oxford all applications for Universal Credit have to be made on-line. If you don't have the internet at home or anyone who can assist you, ask at the jobcentre for help with getting the claim started. If you're a couple you will both need to make an on-line claim.

Once you've completed your application there's a six week wait before your first payment. This wait will be reduced to five weeks from February 2018. It's a good idea to let your landlord know you've started a claim as there will be a delay before you receive your money and are able to pay the rent.

If you don't have any money to get you through this waiting period you can request an 'advance payment'. You can do this at the jobcentre interview or via your on-line journal. You'll need to explain you're experiencing financial hardship and need the money for essentials - to pay for food, top up utilities or cover transport costs. The advance payment is a loan which has to be paid back through your monthly Universal Credit payments.

If you have used your advance payment and are still struggling to get through to your expected payment date you can ask for help. The council is offering help with budgeting and have a hardship fund to support people in these circumstances. You can also ask for help from an advice centre.

■ The Agnes Smith Advice Centres has a drop-in service every morning and can help you with any questions or problems you are have relating to Universal Credit. For drop-in days and times please call 01865 770206.

Update your IT skills with Blitz

IF YOU are thinking of updating your IT skills or learning something new for the new year, then the BLITZ IT Hub could be just what you need to get started. The Hub has a new programme of courses starting in January.

IT Beginners
Six sessions, from Monday 15 Jan to Thursday 1 Feb. Running Monday and Thursday mornings, 9.30–11.45am.

Build your own website
Six sessions,16 January to 20 February, running every Tuesday morning, 9.30–11.45am.

IT Improvers
Six sessions, from Monday 5 February to Thursday 22 February. Running Monday and Thursday mornings, 9.30–11.45am.

ITQ level 2/3
Runs from 10 January until 25 April. Every Wednesday, 9.30am–2.45pm (with lunch break). No classes during school holidays. Please call the team at BLITZ for more details!

PC Maintenance
Six sessions, from Monday 15 January to Thursday 1 February. Runs on Mondays and Thursdays, 12.30–2.45pm.

■ For more info contact the team.
Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Oxford OX4 6HW
01865 806453
www.blitzithub.co.uk

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info@cafespiceoxford.co.uk

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OX4 4HS.
☎ 01865 236116

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☎ 01865 425630

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☎ 01865 792037

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☎ 01865 240709

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Stadhampton, Oxford.
☎ 01865 891663

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☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF.
☎ 01865 714111

Wyevale Garden Centre
Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford.
☎ 01865 326066

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WHAT'S ON IN THE LEYS

A guide to what's available locally. If you want a free listing for your service or event, please ring 01865 711756

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Road. Gives free independent and impartial debt advice and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays, 10am–12pm and Fridays, 10am–12pm.
Also in the Farmhouse,
Tues and Thurs, 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

■ **Young People's Jobshop**
Every Wednesday, 1.30–3pm at the Early Intervention Blackbird Leys Young People Centre. Ages 16–19.
Speak to an advisor for FREE one-to-one advice.

■ **Leys Job Club**
Free support for anyone who would like help with learning or training, or would like to consider a new job, or taking up work for the first time.
Sessions are held at the Youth and Community Centre every Wednesday from 10am–12pm. Just drop in.
Other job club sessions are held in the Children's Centre, please call for details.
☎ Call or text, 0793 1400 108

CHILDREN

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

■ **BLAP Afterschool Club**
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs 8–13 in a structured environment.
3.15–5.30pm. £1.50 per session
☎ 07530933690 and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Brownies**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass, 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com

■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353

DOVECOTE AFTERSCHOOL CLUB
Runs Tuesday to Thursday, 3.30–5.15pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299
and 07974 234661

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 6.30–8.45pm.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4–5pm
£1.20. For 14–18 year olds Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

■ **Rainbows**
For girls aged 5–7 years.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Alexandra, 07804 500313

■ **Air Cadets**
Mon and Wed, 7.30–9.30pm,
Sandy Lane West.
Boys and girls aged 12½ to 20 years.
☎ 01865 777055
oc.2210@aircadets.org

EDUCATION

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 7286

BLACKBIRD LEYS LIBRARY
Cuddesdon Way.
Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying etc.
Opening times:
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed.
☎ 01865 770403

LEISURE

■ **The Oxford Community Choir**
All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367

■ **Irish dancing**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

■ **Blackbird Leys Bowls Club**
Cuddesdon Way. The Club is looking for new members. Open night every Tuesday from 6pm.
☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735
or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

■ **Girls Football (15+)**
Mondays, 6.30pm. FREE.
☎ Marc Fleckney, 07920 463623
Mafleckney@gmail.com

■ **Indoor Bowls Club**
Sandy Lane West. Club is looking for new members and invites men, women, boys and girls of all ages and abilities.
☎ 01865 775891
or email oxbowls1@yahoo.co.uk

LEYS POOLS AND LEISURE CENTRE
Opening Hours
Monday to Friday: 6am–10pm
Saturday: 6am–8pm
Sunday: 8am–8pm
Bank Holiday: 7am–8pm
Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6JL
☎ 0844 893 3222

OXFORD UNITED EDUCATION AND FOOTBALL ACADEMY
Still spaces available for our Education and Football course for boys and girls aged 16–19.
Please email Chad for more details.
01865 336138
chadwoollands@oxfordunitedlearning.co.uk
www.oulfc.co.uk

OLDER PEOPLE

■ **Walking Football**
Oxford City FC, Saturdays, 10–11am.
Waking football, does what is says on the tin! Football but no running allowed.
£3.50.
Anna McKay, 01235 849403
annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
Frys Court, 2 Nightingale Avenue,
OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Over 60s Bingo Club**
Wednesdays 1–3pm
Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
☎ David Stonehill 01865 777074
or Anne Ranger 01865 430504

FREE courses at BLITZ

The BLITZ IT hub is offering free courses to help people who live in the Leys to improve their IT and computer skills. Complete beginners welcome. ***See page 13 for latest courses.***

Call us on 01865 806453 or drop in and see us in Blackbird Leys Community Centre

WELLBEING

■ **Skiptrix Fitness Class**
Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Yoga For All**
Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ **Zumba Fitness and Toning**
Suitable for all fitness levels. The Barn, Greater Leys. Tuesdays and Thursdays 6.30–7.30pm. There are many ways to keep fit and/or lose weight – some are just more fun!
☎ Elishia 07761 343655
or Pat 07957 491868

■ **ZUMBA Fitness Party**
Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177
zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com
www.zumbasarahoxford.com

■ **The Listening Centre**
Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ **Survivors**
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30am–3pm.
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support or to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

■ **Oxfordshire Mind**
Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ **Tai Chi & Qigong**
Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley. £5 and £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ **Rosewood Club**
For people with dementia. Based at The Clockhouse in Greater Leys. Open Monday to Friday, 9.30am–3pm. Offers you a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your carer gets a well-earned rest. £20 per day includes a two course lunch, refreshments and entertainment. Come and see what you think by arranging an informal visit. Call Julie Perks on 749349 or email rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk

NOTICES

The Leys WI

Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm, at The Clockhouse. All ladies aged 18 or over are welcome to attend.
☎ 0 7973 336 041
W: www.theleyswi.moonfruit.com
E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

Socialist Party Meeting

Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Starts 7.30pm
☎ 0208 9888777

The Clockhouse Community Centre

Tea-Time Social
Mondays, 1.30–3.30 pm. Enjoy a cup of tea and a chat. Play board games, Scrabble, Dominoes, Quiz. £1.

Age UK drop-in
Friendly information and help on over-50s services and activities in Oxford.
☎ 395908

Over-50s advice
FREE Monthly session. 10am–12pm.
☎ Appointments, 395908

Yoga
Tuesdays, 10–11am, £2. For those new to Yoga this is a good place to start.

Singing for Fun
Tuesdays, 1.30–3.30pm. FREE.
☎ 395908

Wednesday Crafts
11am–12.30 pm. Bring your knitting, crochet, sewing or drawing/colouring, it's never too late to learn a craft and join us for a natter. £1

Phoenix Rising
We have moved to the Clockhouse. Wednesdays, 1.30–4pm. Activities, speakers, trips please
☎ Sheila Kelly 07534 740589

Tai chi
Thursdays, 10–11am. Boost your flexibility, improve your fitness.

Art Group
Potters Court, Robin Place, Greater Leys OX4 7FF. Thursdays, 2–4pm. Watercolours, pastels and charcoal. £1
☎ 395908

SLIGO – Gardening Club
If you enjoy gardening do come and join us. Thursdays, 2–4pm. Adults of all ages welcome at these monthly meetings! £2

Evening socials
Adults of all ages welcome!
Wednesday 25 October: Quiz Night. 7–9 pm. £2.

News and Views
Fridays, 10am–12noon (term time only) at Blackbird Leys Library
☎A&W College 01235 216459
sasha.east@abingdon-witney.ac.uk

Weekly Walking Group
Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk. A gentle walk for beginner's and enjoy a cuppa back at the Clockhouse at the end of the walk. Meet Mondays,10am, at the Clockhouse
☎ For more info phone 395908.

NEW: Book Worm Corner
Book Club. Do you like reading and fancy a discussion about the book that you are all reading? Why not come and join us!
☎ For more info please phone 395908.

Volunteer car drivers needed!
Come and help local residents with mobility difficulties enjoy Clockhouse Project activities.
☎ For details phone 395908

Leys WI
First Wednesday of month, 7.30–9.30pm. Welcome all women over 16 for a couple of free visits. Hope you'll enjoy it and become a member.
theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk
☎ 395908.

Daybreak's Rosewood Club
Fun, sociable and stimulating days for people with dementia, and a break for their carers. £20 a day (including a hot 2-course meal) plus a transport charge if used.
☎ For details or to book an initial visit phone 749349

The Clockhouse office will be closed from 20 December and open again on the 15 January, however activities agreed and scheduled will be still running.

■ **The Clockhouse Community Centre, Long Ground, Greater Leys OX4 7FX** (*look for the clocks on the roof*) ☎ **01865 395908** **E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com**

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ **Church of the Holy Family**
Eucharist: Sundays, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Tuesdays 1.30-2.30pm and Thursdays 10-11am, or by appointment. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.
☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

■ **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ Rev. Nazarius Mgungwe, 01865 776903
E: sacredheartchurchoxford@gmail.com
www.sacredheartoxford.com

■ **Christ Embassy Oxford**
R&R Frontline Studios, Sandy Lane, Oxford OX4 6LJ
Sundays: 10am–12.30pm,
Wednesdays: 7pm–9pm
☎07984 070632
www. christembassy-oxford.org

■ **Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries**
49 Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2ER
Sundays: Worship/Praise Service, 11am–2pm
Wednesdays: Deliverance, Prayer Quake, Bible Studies, 7pm–9pm
First Saturday of the Month: PMCH (Power Must Change Hand), 7am
☎ 07438 944186 and 07449 171785

■ **Leys Community Church**
Meets at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, Blackbird Leys Road.
☎ Andy and Nicci Longmore, 01865 779700
www.leyscommunitychurch.org.uk

■ **Chrisco Ministries**
Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre,
Sundays: 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ **Seventh Day Adventist Church**
1A Chester St, off Iffley Road.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am.
Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm.
www.freebible.org.uk

■ **Mount Zion Ministries Oxford**
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: Fridays, 7–9pm.
Bible Study: Sundays, 11am–12pm.
☎ Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056
E: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

■ **Redeem Christian Church of God**
Meets at the Sacred Heart, Sawpit Road.
Sunday Service: 2.30–5pm
Bible study: Weds: 6–8pm, except last Fri of month.
☎ 07825 679044
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ **Kingsway International Christian Centre**
Sunday service: 11am–1pm, Children's Church runs concurrently in a separate building.
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 10.45am–12pm.
The Barn, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys OX4 7BU.
☎ 07951 262426
E: admin@kiccoxford.org.uk
www.kiccoxford.org.uk

Blackbird Leys Community Centre

● **Blackbird Leys Community Centre is a Wi-Fi Hotspot**
To use the free Wi-Fi please select 'Oxford Free Wi-Fi'

● **BLITZ**
IT courses and trainings for all abilities. Course details available in the Centre reception.
☎ 01865 806453

● **Early Intervention Service**
Early intervention and specialist services for children, young people and families
☎ 01865 816202

● **Soundworks**
Music studio and production
☎ 01865 401585

● **IT HUB**
IT Hub open access drop in sessions.
Tuesdays 12–3pm
and Fridays 9am–12pm.

● **Leys CDI Youth Project**
After School Club and Arts Award Project, Mondays, 3.30–8pm
Battlefield of the Mind (Young women's project), Tuesdays, 3.30–7.30pm
Diversionary Project, Wednesdays, 12–8pm
Afterschool Club and Tech Fridays 3.30–8pm
☎ 01865 395927

● **Credit Union**
Community financial service for savings and low cost loans
Opening Times: Mondays 11am–1pm, Tuesdays 7–7.30pm, Wednesdays 10am–12pm, Fridays 3–5pm
☎ 01865 718503

● **Home-Start**
Family support charity for under 5s.
☎ 01865 779991

JACK ARGENT ROOM

● **SR Oxford Survivors**
Self-help community group for over 16s. Fridays and Saturdays, 10.30am–2.30pm
☎ Trish, 07824 644874

● **Oxford Polish Association**
☎ For dates contact Ewa, 07585 442696

● **FriendLeys**
Community coffee morning, £2.50, includes refreshments, Wednesdays, 10.30am–1pm
☎ 01865 402070

● **Blackbird Leys Choir**
New members always welcome. Wednesdays, 6.30pm–9pm
☎ 07775 945279

SPORTS HALL

● **Boxing Club**
Juniors and Seniors. ☎ For details contact Tony, 01865 432995

ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

IT Hub: 12 networked PCs with fast wired internet connection, ceiling mounted projector and air conditioning.

Jack Argent Room: Seating for up to 60 people.

Sports Hall: Space for a wide range of activities.

First Floor Meeting Room: For up to ten people.

For more details contact Jayne on 01865 402070

■ **Blackbird Leys Community Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, OX4 6HW
T: 01865 402070
E: blackbirdleyscommcentre@oxford.gov.uk

THE BLACKBIRD LEYS LEARNING CENTRE

Courses include evening IT courses, guitar playing and 3D Sculpture using recyclable materials. Courses coming over the next few weeks include an introduction to politics, creative writing and so much more

To find out more about the courses pop in to Blackbird Leys Library or call 01235 216447

City centre footfall is on the up

FOOTFALL In Oxford city centre has risen 3.1% on the previous year to date and is set to maintain its positive trend with the opening of Westgate Oxford Shopping Centre last month.

During the week commencing 23 October 2017, the change in footfall for Oxford over the last 52 weeks was 1.3% up on the previous year, while the number of visitors counted for this week was 929,260. The busiest day was Saturday 28 October with 160,027 visitors, approximately 10,000 more than an average Saturday. These footfall figures - the highest to date this year - were recorded during the half-term school break, which coincided with the opening of the Westgate Centre.

By mid-November, three weeks on from the opening of the Westgate Centre, footfall had reached 2.2% up on the previous year, and footfall for the year to date is now 3.1% up on the previous year. The city is still commanding visitor numbers of 783,648 per week, which compares to an average year to date change percentage of +0.3 in the South East Region, and -0.8% for the UK as a whole.

The footfall counters are located in Queen Street, Cornmarket and St George's Place, and clearly show that Cornmarket is still the busiest location of the three, confirming that the pedestrian flow is not concentrated in the west of the city centre.

The £440 million Westgate Centre, which is located in the west end quarter of the city centre, opened to the public on 24 October and has greatly enhanced the shopping experience in Oxford. It has created 3,400 retail positions and is expected to give a significant boost to the local economy.

Anchored by a three-storey John Lewis department store, the Westgate Centre boasts 125 new shops, restaurants, cafés and leisure uses including a boutique five- screen Curzon Cinema. Other parts of the city centre, such as the historic Covered Market with its unique and variegated retail offer, are expected to benefit from the increased footfall drawn in by the Westgate Centre.

There are currently 20 empty units – or 6.4% - in both the primary and secondary retail areas of the city centre, which compares with a current UK average of 12%. The City Council also expects to fill two vacant units in The Covered Market soon, given the high level of interest from prospective tenants.

Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, said: "The latest footfall figures reflect a vibrant city centre whose retail offer has been greatly enhanced by the opening of Westgate Oxford.

The confirmation of Cornmarket as the busiest location is encouraging as this means that business continues to be brisk in other parts of the city centre. There is still a high demand for retail space in the centre of Oxford and the migration of some of the existing retailers to the Westgate provides a great opportunity for other businesses to secure premises in the heart of the city, and this demand will continue to be monitored. The Council is working with the landlords of all the vacant units to discuss future leasing plans. Some of the empty properties will soon be redeveloped as part of the ongoing regeneration of the city centre and others are happy to work with us on the visual impact of the unit while they await incoming tenants."

YOU'RE HIRED! A confidence boost at The Oxford Academy

A FREE course designed to make your CV shine, boost your confidence and help you brush up on interview skills to make you win your dream job is on offer at The Oxford Academy. The course is called You're Hired! and will run for six weeks from Wednesday January 10 from 11.30am to 1.30pm at The Oxford Academy in Littlemore and is for anyone aged 19 and over who is struggling to find a job. For more info or to book email rosie.butler@theoxfordacademy.org.uk